DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 326 275 JC 910 009

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TITLE The Associate Program for Adjunct Instructors.
INSTITUTION College of the Canyons, Valencia, CA.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 7p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adjunct Faculty; Community Colleges; *Faculty Development; Inservice Teacher Education; Instructional Development; *Part Time Faculty; Peer Evaluation; Program Descriptions; Student Evaluation of Teacher Performance; *Teacher Effectiveness; Teacher Evaluation; *Teacher Improvement; *Teacher Workshops; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS College of the Canyons CA

ABSTRACT

At the College of the Canyons in California, the majority of faculty are adjunct instructors, many of whom have had little formal background in teaching. In an effort to support these faculty and to assure the quality of instruction, the Associate Program for Adjunct Instructors was instituted. The program emphasizes the development and evaluation of skills rather than the dissemination of information, and instructors who complete the program become Adjunct Associate Instructors. The program completion involves four steps: (1) obtaining a recommendation from the division chairperson, which usually requires that the adjunct first complete at least one semester of instruction at the college; (2) completing a 24-hour Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) in which each participant presents a series of 10-minute videotaped presentations; (3) completing an 8- to 10-hour Advanced Teaching Workshop (ATW), which examines issues such as questioning techniques, critical thinking, and writing across the curriculum; and (4) undergoing a classroom evaluation which involves classroom observation and feedback from colleagues and/or students. Benefits for Associates completing the program include improved teaching skills; the professional status of having completed the ISW and the ATW; and a program stipend and 10% salary increase. Criteria for candidate selection include seniority, the number of times an instructor has applied to the program, a fair representation of disciplines, and comments submitted by division chairs. An application for admission to the program is appended. (GFW)

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THE ASSOCIATE PROGRAM FOR ADJUNCT INSTRUCTORS

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THE ASSOCIATE PROGRAM
FOR ADJUNCT INSTRUCTORS

Adjunct instructors compose the majority of the faculty at College of the Canyons. Each day and night thousands of students judge our college on the basis of their abilities. Some of them are excellent instructors. Some of them have other careers and teaching is only a periodic diversion. Most of them have little or no formal background in teaching or pedagogical practices. If the college expects these instructors to pursue excellence in teaching it will have to provide support for that pursuit.

The College of the Canyons Associate Program for adjunct instructors is intended to provide adjunct instructors with a means to pursue professional advancement and a mechanism for the college to reward that pursuit. The trial and error method of teaching improvement is woefully inadequate. Although teachers do change simply by trying new methods, they improve much more rapidly by working with colleagues in the pursuit of specific goals. The college has a responsibility to provide a framework whereby adjunct instructors can consciously and conscientiously pursue goals specifically associated with teaching excellence. By providing that framework and responding to the needs of the adjunct faculty, we provide support for our employees in a way that directly supports our principle mission, the education of students.

The Associate Program for Adjunct Instructors is designed to place an emphasis on the development and evaluation of teaching skills rather than the dissemination of information. Throughout the program instructors will be asked to demonstrate the use of specific teaching practices and will then evaluate their performance with the help of their colleagues. This design responds to the needs of a diverse group of teachers with a variety of skill levels.

Requirements

In order to be classified as an Adjunct Associate Instructor, an individual would need to satisfy the following four requirements:

1. **Recommendation for the Program**
   A recommendation for the program must be obtained from the Division Chairperson in the division in which the adjunct instructor is teaching. Making the recommendation is entirely the discretion of the Division Chair. The Associate Program recommends that an instructor have completed at least one semester of teaching at COC before being recommended.

2. **Completion of an Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW)**
   The ISW is a 24 hour course for instructional improvement which was first developed by the Ministry of Education in Canada. The workshop emphasizes very specific, fundamental teaching skills including the basics of an effective lesson, planning and preparing for a lesson, and the use of teaching aids. Each participant must present a series of 10-minute, videotaped presentations. This feature of the workshop, along with the collegial feedback provided by the group, allows even experienced instructors to learn from these teaching fundamentals. The workshop can be scheduled in a variety of formats that would make it attractive for part-time employees. For instance, it can be conducted at night or on weekends.

3. **Completion of the Advanced Teaching Workshop (ATW)**
   The Advanced Teaching Workshop is designed to provide exposure to teaching topics beyond the basics provided in the ISW. The topics are not set in concrete and will change as needs change. As an example, the following four topics might be covered in an 8-10 hour workshop: Learning and Teaching Styles; Questioning Techniques; Critical Thinking;

Writing Across the Curriculum. Just as in the ISW, the workshop would be designed for adult learners with an emphasis on participant involvement.

4. **Completion of one Associate's Classroom Evaluation**
   After completion of the two workshops above, the adjunct faculty member may apply for evaluation. The Associate's Classroom evaluation will be less structured and more diagnostic than a normal evaluation. There could be a special focus on the classroom skills developed in ISW; however, if an instructor desires, evaluation techniques other than observing one lecture may be used. As an example, some colleges use a student interview technique where the students in a selected class are interviewed directly about the instructor's classroom performance. The information gleaned would be used to further help the instructor to hone classroom skills, not to determine their acceptance into Associate status. After two workshops, this gives instructors an opportunity to receive feedback on their teaching in the real-world.

Benefits for Associates

The following benefits will accrue to the instructors who complete the program:

1. **Improved Teaching**
   Since the program emphasizes the practice of teaching skills followed by collegial evaluation, teachers at every level of proficiency should profit from the program. Participants will find a very direct and immediate application for their learning. In some instances, changes in the classroom could be expected to occur within days or weeks of participation in the workshops.

2. **Professional Advancement**
   The ISW, the ATW, and the granting of Associate status are each concrete indicators of professional development. Completion of these programs is representative of a significant broadening of ones teaching knowledge and skills. College of the Canyons, and other community colleges (many of which are now familiar with the ISW), will hopefully be cognizant of that fact during the hiring process. However, Associate status at COC in no way infers any formal priority in hiring and all participants are clearly apprised of that fact.

3. **Higher Pay**
   Participants in the program are paid a stipend of $125 for attending the I.S.W. and $50 for attending the A.T.W. In addition, instructors who complete the program and receive Associate status will be paid at a 10% higher rate than other adjunct faculty when subsequently teaching classes at COC.

Application Procedures

Based on our meeting with adjunct instructors at the beginning of last fall semester, we expect a large number of applications for entrance into the program. Unfortunately, there are severe limitations on the number of new persons we can admit into the program. The workshops are costly to administer and the small-group format limits the number of participants in the ISW to five. We are going to fund two or three workshops during 1990-91, therefore, admit between ten and fifteen individuals into the Associates Program.

Participants will be selected on the basis of the following criteria. Some consideration will be

given to seniority; instructors who have been with the college the longest should be rewarded for that tenure (Plus, we will not be able to accept teachers who are in their first semester of teaching at COC.). However, within a given ISW there is a benefit to having participants from different disciplines and different divisions. An attempt will be made to represent each division and as many disciplines as possible. Over the years we will consider the number of times that an individual has applied for entrance into the program. If someone is not accepted the first year, their chances increase considerably in subsequent years (This means there is an advantage to making application even if one's seniority is low.). Application comments made by lead instructors and division chairs will also be considered. No one of these criteria will entirely override any other; therefore, do not assume that you definitely will be selected or definitely won't on the basis of one criterion alone.

If you are interested in entering the program, complete the attached application. If there is a lead instructor in your teaching field, submit the application to the lead instructor who will then forward it to the division chair. If there is no lead instructor, submit the application directly to the division chair who will forward it to the Associates Program.

The Associates Program is directed by the Instruction Office. If you need more information on the program or if you have suggestions, please feel free to contact Joe Gerda (Ext. 385).

APPLICATION FOR THE ASSOCIATE PROGRAM FOR ADJUNCT INSTRUCTORS

NAME, ADDRESS & PHONE
(Please type or print)

DIVISION

TEACHING FIELDS

YRS. TEACHING AT COC

Which of the following workshops could you attend? Do you have a preference?

October 13,14,21,27 (Weekend-6 hours/day)

January 9,10,12,13,15,16 (Weekday Evenings & Weekend Days)

Signature of lead faculty if applicable
Comments

Signature of Division Chair
Comments

Division Chair please forward to Joe Gerda by Sept. 17th.

Objectives

To increase faculty development opportunities for adjunct faculty members.

To provide opportunities for adjunct faculty members to practice teaching skills and to discuss those skills with other faculty members.

To reward faculty members with increased status and increased pay for their pursuit of teaching improvement.

To increase the knowledge of adjunct faculty members of a variety of basic teaching skills and practices.

Evaluation

The program will be evaluated on the bais of two criteria:

1. The number of adjunct faculty members attracted to the program and the number of hours of faculty development provided.

2. An expected increase in adjunct faculty member's knowledge and awareness of the basic teaching skills and practices introduced and exhibited in the program.

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